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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 000141

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SUBJECT: ITALIAN G8 OUTREACH APPROACH CLARIFIED; SOUS SHERPA
REQUESTS CALL WITH CLIMATE ENVOY

REF: A) 07 Rome 1522 B) 07 Rome 1326

11. (U) Sensitive but Unclassified. Please Protect
Accordingly.

12. (SBU) Summary: On February 3, Italian Sous Sherpa Guido La Tella briefed DCM and Science Counselor on the GOI approach to G8 Summit structure. While noting that consensus has not yet been reached among G8 members, La Tella said the GOI plan is to limit the summit's first day to the core eight countries; the second day would include the "Outreach Five" and Egypt, and the third day would add African heads of state. Stressing the GOI's need to begin planning for the Major Economies (ME) leaders' meetings, La Tella asked for initial guidance regarding the USG position on the ME process and asked Post to arrange a phone call with Special Envoy for Climate Change Todd Stern. The DCM agreed to facilitate the communication. In a farewell call with the Ambassador on February 4, Italy's Sherpa, Giampiero Massolo, asked for US views on three Italian G8 proposals: climate change, trade, and the relationship between G8/G8 plus 5/G20. End Summary.

G8 Outreach

13. (SBU) DCM and SciCouns met with Italian Sous Sherpa Guido La Tella to facilitate preparations for the July Summit and lead-up meetings. The DCM asked La Tella for an overview of the Italian approach to G8 outreach. La Tella confirmed the GOI summit proposal would reflect the policy paper distributed electronically to G8 members early in 2009: the Italians recognize the importance of the core G8 meetings, but believe the G8 should also commit to a structured, permanent dialogue with other nations, particularly given the current financial crisis and the influence of emerging economies on overall worldwide economic stability. Repeating what the Italians have told us previously, the plan is to reserve the first day of the summit for G8 Heads of State. On the second day, they propose inviting the "Outreach Five" nations (Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa) plus Egypt to take part in the

meetings. The third day would then include heads of state from African nations, as well as a meeting of the MEM. La Tella added the Italian Sherpa would be tabling a proposal following this outline at the concomitant Feb 3 Sherpa meeting in Naples.

¶4. (SBU) Noting that the G8 Heiligendamm Dialogue Process (HDP) is slated to conclude in 2009, La Tella said the GOI will propose creating a more permanent framework for outreach. In response to a question from the DCM on the impact of the April meeting of the G-20 in London on the Italian's plans for the G8, La Tella responded that the GOI was talking to the UK about the G-20 agenda, which, would focus on the financial crisis. He said the GOI understands that the G-20 may need to address some broader economic issues, given the depth of the world economic crisis. La Tella made clear, however, that the GOI is working to keep economic governance issues under the purview of the G8.

Climate Change -----

¶5. (SBU) La Tella, who is also Italy's lead negotiator for the Major Economies (ME) process, highlighted Italy's commitment to host a ME leaders' meeting in conjunction with the G8 Summit, and asked that post put him in contact with Special Envoy Todd Stern. Offering to travel to Washington to initiate the dialogue, La Tella explained that the GOI needs to plan now for the summit and related preparatory meetings. In particular, he is seeking to clarify the scope of work for the ME and G8 processes in producing climate-related text for the G8 Summit in July.

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¶6. (SBU) Additionally, the GOI would like a signal on the USG's approach to the ME and overall climate change negotiations; the GOI is amenable to a change in the ME name, if the USG feels that is needed to signify a change. La Tella said he had just had a meeting with the Japanese mission and they agreed that the G8/ME leaders' meeting needs to give a strong substantive signal on addressing climate change - "maybe not a numerical target for greenhouse-gas emissions, but something of real substance that also is acceptable to all." In an aside, La Tella also asked for a USG position on UNSYG Ban Ki Moon's plan for a smaller climate change negotiating group. La Tella said that the GOI did not necessarily object to a new process, but worried that additional meetings might overburden Ministers who are already committed to other climate change fora. He repeated Italy's offer to host a ME negotiators' meeting this spring (ref B).

Possible Second Energy Ministerial -----

¶7. (SBU) In a separate but related issue, La Tella raised the prospect of a second G8 Energy Ministerial in Milan this fall. Each ministry, La Tella said, is responsible for its own ministerial planning. Economic Development Minister Scajola is proposing the fall ministerial to reflect the current importance of energy issues, he said.

Readout of the Feb 2-3 Sherpa meeting -----

¶8. (SBU) Giampiero Massolo, Secretary General of the MFA, Italy's G8 Sherpa called on the Ambassador February 4 for a farewell call. Massolo was pleased with the outcome of the first Sherpa meeting, held in Naples February 2-3. While recognizing that the Obama Administration is still in the process of formalizing its positions on various issues, he noted three areas where Italy is eager to receive the views of the US:

-- climate change: He noted that the La Maddalena Summit would create a platform for Copenhagen, but we need to identify the format and how to engage major emerging economies, such as India and China.

-- trade: The G8 could provide the vehicle for identifying a way forward on WTO and other trade issues.

-- the relationship between the G8/G8 plus 5/G20: The Italian view is that the G20 format is too unwieldy to manage, while the G8 is "less representative" because it does not involve the emerging economies. Italy, therefore, would like to emphasize the G8 plus 5 and the La Maddalena Summit could be the setting for a new, more permanent format. The G8 would still exist, but the inclusion of the Outreach five would be institutionalized and made a permanent feature of future summits.

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